

notes:

a recomposed version of pp. 63-68 (the end)  
which attempts graceful coherent conclusion  
may be read in substitution of the original

also, portions underlined in red (or sidelined  
in red) might be dispensed with altogether  
(they add up)

now in black  
from XEROX.

TRANSLATION

, Marjorie Tichenor

prospective title: PROGRESS AND VIDEO (1)

# OPEN STUDIO VIDEO PROJECT

STATION HILL RD. BARRYTOWN, NY 12507 tel. (914) 758-6308

Ralph Eocking and Sherry Miller Feb. 6, 1978 Oswego, NY  
with Willet Sharp, George Quasha, Gary Hill and Neil Lussman, Paul Davis, *Ree*  
Side 1 *Doughby* *Bode*

EQ I would love to see some tape. As I expressed on the way up,  
I feel personally very awkward without knowing some of the work,  
at least, because that's what's always interesting to go from.

WS Well, Maybe we can break <sup>this</sup> into a couple of different parts-  
Your general thing first, then take a break, then see some tape and  
then go into a more specific thing

RE Alright, where do you want to start?

WS You want to start?

RE I don't know where to start, so...

WS Well, why don't you start with where you..

RE I don't usually start these conversations..

SM They usually start this way

WS ~~in the middle~~ <sup>first</sup> We want to find out what the particular situation  
is right here and now, on Feb 6, 1978. What is happening with you  
now? What is your main concern?

RE What's my main concern? I'm going on sabbatical next year. ~~in the middle~~ <sup>in the middle</sup>  
~~the~~ So, seriously.

S You said something a few minutes ago about it is time being part  
of a crisis. You said this is a particularly so, especially for you  
to you.

RE Well, crisis is a common word that has been for the last 100  
years, in education and in the arts to a certain extent. It's a common  
word in other disciplines and in the sciences, it's in fact a  
word that has a great history. It's a word that has been used  
for a long time. It's a word that has been used for a long time.  
It's a word that has been used for a long time. It's a word that has been used for a long time.

# OPEN STUDIO VIDEO PROJECT

STATION HILL RD. BARRYTOWN, NY 12507 tel. (914) 758-6308

cut back from what our size was and what our support was, and it came to a point of leveling off. We thought they were leveling off and they cut us back some more. It caused me to resign the chairmanship.

\*  
WS You resigned your chairmanship (chairman of the Cinema Dept. at SUNY at Binghamton)? When was that?

RM I don't know, when was that? As of the...

SM The 8th (of Feb)

WS Is this in light of the cutbacks made to some of the departments?

RM Well yeah. Their latest move was to take the secretary away half time. You know Marilyn, you know what she does for the department. She essentially is the thread that's been consistent through the whole thing and the administration's uh...

WS So they're giving you a lower level of support than you have to have

RM Yeah, that's what I've been telling them for quite a while. At the same time, their proposal for the next 5 years has to do with a static support system that recognizes only that we should exist. And the statement they made about this was terrible.

WS Maybe you should fill us in a bit about your position there, when you took it and what you do and that. We just want to know, what's your position? What are you resigning?

RM I'm resigning a chairmanship.

WS But you had a lot of video and built a whole video situation

RM The only video that was there was...

WS What have you built and how long have you been there?

# OPEN STUDIO VIDEO PROJECT

STATION HILL RD. BARRYTOWN, NY 12507 tel. (914) 758-6308

RM In terms of video, I've been working in video since about '69, I guess.

WS There?

RM Yeah. Uh huh.

NZ/WS As part of the Cinema Dept?

RM No. It wasn't part of the Cinema Dept. to begin with.

WS Tell about the background of that.

- RM Oh good. You want to go through all that?

WS Uh-HUH. Quickly, just a few sentences

NZ Well how is it that video...

WS Wait a minute, wait, wait, wait, We know the question. Now don't...

I'm interested in your personal... just a few sentences

RM You want me to start where I started in a minute ago

WS Even before, even before.

RM Are you dictating style to me? What's this, Willoby, god damn it.

WS It's important to know you did other things before you did video.

RM Well, I did pottery, and sculptures.

SM And photography.

RM Right, and photography. I came to Binghamton after I'd been fired in the previous school I'd been teaching in.

WS In Long Island?

RM No, this was at Allegheny College in Pennsylvania. Actually, I wasn't fired, I just wasn't given tenure, which is a gentle way of easing you out, and legal.

WS You were teaching pottery there?

RM Teaching pottery and drawing and design and sculpture

NZ How did you get introduced to video?

RM I ran into Nam June on 57th street at the Echino Gallery in 1968.

He was having a show there. I was in New York with a group of students from Allegheny College. I just happened to wander into this gallery and there was this madman running with magnets and holding them up to TV sets. I said, what the hell is this? So he and I started talking, and he and I got along very well.

NZ Make friends with madmen quickly?

RM Well, I did with him. He wasn't a madman. Slight exaggeration.

Seemed like a very interesting idea, using television other than what I knew about television which was just what comes over the air.

WS You hadn't used television yourself yet?

RM No.

WS So it was an inspiration in a sense.

RM I don't know whether it was an inspiration or not, but it was certainly curious to me. The whole idea was curious to me.

GM So your first relationship to it was in reference to TV and not say, in reference to photography that you were doing? You saw it as the difference with TV and what you could do with it, and not what you could do with images?

RM Uh yes, it was attributable to TV. I had no sense of relating it to photography at all.

WS So what happened? Why was that important, your meeting with Paik? What did it change in you? What was the consequence of it?

RM Well, I don't know. Paik's the kind of a person, at least for me, anyway, that he made sense to me. I have no idea why. I couldn't logically delineate the reasons. By June and I made sense to

# OPEN STUDIO VIDEO PROJECT

STATION HILL RD. BARRYTOWN, NY 12507 tel. (914) 758-6308

RM cont... each other. So I went back to Allegheny College and sat there for a while and kept thinking about Paik. He and I decided to get together again in New York, So, I asked the president of the university here if he would give me the money to fly to talk to Nam June some more. So he did, and I went and talked to him some more. Again, I had no idea what he was doing; I couldn't figure out what he was doing. But something about him made sense to me. So we kept doing that, you know, running into each other and ~~uh~~, you know, this is all very fuzzy. I think it was in Boston. I was hanging out with him at GBM and we were watching Jackie Casand and a few other people who were putting a show together, and he started talking about Russ ~~McCann~~ and the NY State Council on the Arts. By this time I'd come to Binghamton; I'd bought some equipment; I got the university here to buy some CV portapacks; I set up on campus, and got a B32, a good old B32

WS That's gone through quite an evolution.

RM Yeah. The thing I started doing was just gathering junk. As I said before, we had all this technology sitting around just trying to figure out what the hell to do with it. I'd had no background at all in electronics or anything except mechanical stuff, and I was making a few pieces that were related to making mylar and sound that were sort of interesting to me. At the same time we were fooling around with television. I made a few tapes. I was lending equipment to students.

WS What year was it?

RM I think it was 1969 or 70

SM 1, 69.

NZ Were these pieces in mylar and sound inspirational?

RM We showed one of these in New York at one of Ken's shows

WS Ken?

RM Ken Jacobs. If you want to be sure about this, it was the first time he showed the shadow play, I showed that thing too. He keeps bugging me now. He wants to put it back together and can't figure how to get all the stuff together to do it.

WS When I was visiting you at the university, you said you had taken over a lot of obsolete equipment and turned ... how did you use the resources at the university?

RM Mainly, the way I try to use them is to sell them as much as possible and buy other stuff. Oh, and that's another thing that happened at the same time, ~~was~~ that when I first came here they were ~~was~~ building what's called "Educational Communications." They were just building the building. All the theaters and everything on campus now weren't there then. I kept looking at it and saying what the hell are you going to do with all this? There was a head of Educational Communications who said we were going to revolutionize the whole world through television, and the educational system by having all these big machines, and not letting anybody touch them. Didn't make a hell of a lot of sense to me. So I finally convinced the other part of the administration to give me some money to buy some equipment that other people could touch. So I set off to find out what people could do with television. I think that, the original proposal that

# OPEN STUDIO VIDEO PROJECT

STATION HILL RD. BARRYTOWN, NY 12507 tel. (914) 758-6308

RM continued ties me back into this GBA scene. Nam June says "call this Russ ~~guy~~ guy," so I call him and he says "yeah, come on down to New York and we'll talk about this." So I did and he said "apply to the Council for some money and see if we can get something for this idea of yours," and the idea was to open up a place in Binghamton that would have open access for people who wanted to see what they could with television. The rough premise was to take the artists and the educators and the rest of the public, those three sectors, and just see what you could do--as a very loose premise to see what they could do with television.

NZ Did you document your activities of those years for Council applications and things like that or was it just ongoing?

RM Some of it, yeah.

WS So you applied for how much money?

RM I forget.

SM The original application? I don't know how much we applied for.

WS What year was that?

RM '70.

WS But you got some money?

RM We got \$50,000

WS You don't know how much you applied for, but you got \$50,000

RM Which knocked me out of course. I mean, my God! And the funny thing about that was that I didn't even have an organization. I wasn't incorporated, I wasn't even organized.

WS You had the idea though, a \$50,000 idea.

RM Well, I think it was probably political to a certain extent.

WS Russel got it for you?

RM There was nobody working upstate on this at the time, and there's a tradition in the Council to try and spread the money throughout the state.

GE Was that the same year the Video Freaks and Ken and everyone got their first grant?

RM Probably. It was around that time, yeah. Well, Ken and the Freaks were in New York then and I was the only person in upstate to get any money that I know of.

SM There was one the April Video Co-op. I think they got one too, but they were very early. I don't know what happened to them.

WS So tell us about as soon as you got all this money--a big check and everything--and what did you do with it, and what happened then?

RM Well, it was interesting the way they gave the money to me.

WSKZ, our local television station, here, also, I think, was in about a million and a half of debt because the guy who managed it just stuffed it under and left. They had to find an organization to give me the money, so they gave it to WSKZ with proviso that the money go directly to me. So they just reuted the first check of \$50,000 to me and walked in and handed it to me. It was made out to me. I said, "all right what do I do now?" So I leave or do I stay? So I went to the bank and opened up a checking account.

GE When did you come across the name?

# OPEN STUDIO VIDEO PROJECT

STATION HILL RD. BARRYTOWN, NY 12507 tel. (914) 758-6308

RM We started out with the name, Community Center for Television Production, CCTVP.

WS When did you and Sherry meet in all this?

RM Sherry and I met in the middle 60s. She was at Allegheny College when I was teaching there.

WS So she was part of the organization from the very beginning?

RM No, her boyfriend was part of the organization.

WS Not

RM Her boyfriend was part of the organization.

WS Didn't know about that.

SM Gets very complicated.

WS We want to know the whole story. Go ahead.

RM There are four members of the board of directors. One is Sherry; one is me; one is my wife; and the other is Ken, Sherry's boyfriend.

WS Sounds like a great combination, a winning combination so far.

RM Wa ha ha ha

WS A winning combination so far.

SM When it finally got juggled around probably it was fine.

WS So what happened to the 34,000 dollars? You actually had the money.

RM I went down and found the place on Court St. and opened it up.

WS So with the money then, you found the place. You didn't have an office or anything.

RM I was working off the campus, so in order to tie the community into it I felt I should get a place downtown.

NZ Was there a stipulation in the grant that you do tie the community into it?

RM That wasn't a stipulation, that was what I proposed.

WS Rephrase the proposal.

RM The proposal, very roughly, was to take the artists and the arts, and education and the educators, and the general public, and look at those three things somewhat separately, but give them all access to video equipment, with no ties on that. Whatever you want to do is up to you. And we'd find out what people did.

WS Sort of like a CETA grant but much larger.

RM It was a curious thing at the time because the machines were expensive, as expensive as they are now; black and white portapack was around \$1500 or something like that. People would come in, we'd ask them what their names were and they'd say we want to use a machine. We'd show them how to use it and hand it to them and say bring it back soon because we need it. And they always brought it back, so things started to evolve from that.

PD Just a question regarding the money going through WSKZ as opposed to the university, what happened that the university got out of the circuit?

RM The university can't be given money by the State Council on the arts. Because they're part of the state.

PD I see.

RM So I had to set up this whole thing outside of the university, which wasn't a bad idea. The university was in I was crazy because I couldn't administrate anything, so the whole thing wouldn't go anywhere.

WS They were wrong, weren't they.

# OPEN STUDIO VIDEO PROJECT

STATION HILL RD. BARRYTOWN, NY 12507 tel. (914) 758-6308

RM They changed their minds, yeah.

GM What kind of events and people and things that happened made the transition from a community access center, you know, here's video equipment, let's go out and make a videotape, to the idea of controlling video images?

RM Well, that was part of the art. That was always there. That was Nam June.

GM In other words, that was happening at the same time.

RM Yeah, all this was happening at the same time. Nam June and I were always working together with ideas.

GM Was he up here a lot at that time?

RM Yeah, yeah.

NZ Did Ken Dominic serve as a teacher to enable people who live in the community to become familiar with the systems? Was he doing video art at the same time?

RM (Inaudible)

NZ Was he doing video art at the same time?

RM Yeah, yeah.

WS But you got off the track, now. You were saying...

RM Park was sort of a motivating force for a lot of these things that happened. I mean that's what Nam June's good at. He's kind of a something that runs around from one point to another and causes things to happen.

WS What was Russell's input after you got the check and everything?

RM I don't remember, didn't get much input at all. Russell's position was that he was coming into the Council as the consultant on video. In fact, they didn't have a video section then; they were working on a special program. I'm not sure how all these things took place, but Peter got in there and everything was filmed in film and video, Peter Bradley.

NZ Who is Peter Bradley?

RM Peter Bradley used to be the head of the film, video, and...

GQ Film, TV, and literature Division. Just resigned.

WS Forced out?

GQ Yeah, he wasn't forced out, he just wasn't promoted. And he was insulted. We could have stayed as long as he wanted.

RM He wasn't terminated. We left.

GQ He left on his own steam, yeah.

WS Well,

RM It was made impossible for him to stay.

WS That's it, that's it. You said it better than I could. There's a lot of that, isn't there? There have probably been a lot of people who have gone through your organization who...

RY Well, it's sure to happen more and more now because of the times. It's getting to this whole thing of economics...

WS It's hard to survive.

RE Well, it's difficult for the arts to survive in these kinds of times. They can survive, but it's difficult for them to grow.

We're getting more and more pressure from the Council right now to do things that are more visible, i.e., put TV programs on the air.

WS Well, you know there that comes from Jimmy. Jimmy wants that.

# OPEN STUDIO VIDEO PROJECT

STATION HILL RD. BARRYTOWN, NY 12507 tel. (914) 758-6308

RM Jimmy wants to be on TV or what?

WS Jimmy is a Democratic Populist and the justification for expenditures on ETC and any other non-profit organization, for him, depends on broadcast visibility. And that's what's happening. I was told that by Jimmy, in Washington.

RM Well, you can see it's a lot easier in this state. We've been going through this for wh... and this state is probably the most vital place for the development of video.

WS Definitely.

RM And I never really felt that any one on the staff or on the Council knows what's going on in video.

WS No, they don't.

RM Unless it's something that's fairly recognizable to them.

WS They've been able to do pretty well in spite of that, haven't they?

PD The problem is wider than that. It's the basic research-to-applied problem-solving problem.

WS What do you mean?

PD The times, the times that we're in saying that things have to provide immediate solutions instead of basic contributions to theory, ideas, as opposed to - make it visible, make real, make it do something now.

RM It's less and less immediate solutions as it is understandable solutions.

PD Reasonable things that aren't part of something bigger.

RM Well, you run into a time when you no longer have the kind of benevolence either in education or in the arts which, within my sphere of understanding of this, ~~has~~ used to be there. When you have good times on the D.O.B., division of the budget, in Albany, they'll say, "spend your money ~~and it's all right~~ and that's all we want to know." And now the Division of the Budget in Albany is saying "spend your money in particular ways, and we want to know how you're going to spend it before you spend it, and then we'll let you know if you can spend it." So what you've got is a situation...

WS Control.

RM Control by the bureaucracy that actually is the main accountant for the money.

WS And there becomes a diminishing return in terms of accepting that control because sometimes you just don't want to do what they want you to do.

RM Yeah, and that's when you resign your chairmanship.

WS So Ralph Hoeking, what's next, what's next? Where do we go at the end of a first phase?

RM Oh, I ~~might never have left the university.~~

WS No, but you anticipate leaving, don't you?

RM My only problem is that I don't want to be a co-ordinator-administrator, and I also don't want to be caught between my faculty and the administration as the person who has to transfer information in between. I want them to call each other. If they're pissed off, let them call the dean. I don't want to hear about it, because I can't do anything except get the lining of my stomach eaten out a little bit more. So I'm checking out of that, And it's both sides.

# OPEN STUDIO VIDEO PROJECT

STATION HILL RD. BARRYTOWN, NY 12507 tel. (914) 758-6308

WS Do you think it's the nature of the bureaucracy that you can't deal with anymore, or is it...?

RM It's the current nature of it now. It's the tightening up business. There's another committee that meets once in a while, every couple of months. It's called the State Wide Committee on the Arts or the Campus Wide Committee on the Arts...

WS When I was here last time you were having them in your studio.

RM Yeah, right. One of the things we're studying now is this whole problem of current kinds of administration that are affecting the arts. And this idea of accountability is probably the biggest problem the arts are having. I think it's a problem in education too. It comes to a point now where you've got a liberal arts structure on this campus, and the liberal arts structure is staring to say, maybe we ought to have a few more guys in ditchdigging because alot of these guys don't get jobs when they get out, which is fine if you want to start a whole mechanism that relates directly to training people for jobs, but liberal arts has not traditionally done that.

WS I think you hit on a very important word, "accountability." I think you could spin a lot of very interesting ideas off of that.

RM One of the things that I keep telling the administration is, when they ask me if we train people for industry, I say of course we do. We train people for the art industry. They don't know quite how to deal with that. I don't think they really believe it. But how do you become accountable in the arts? It's a difficult thing to do. Especially when the accountability that's applied to you is the same applied to people who make popcorn balls- whether or not the popcorn balls are all of a certain size or have the same amount of fluid to hold them together.

WS In terms of your own accountability and the kind of dichotomy between doing all of this work and being a teacher and doing ETC with other people and doing your own work, how do you start trying to define other kinds of accountability, how do you balance out the different roles that you play? Is that a big problem?

RM I think there's a lot of things confused there. I don't know if I can deal with accountability of all of them. The major accountability that I deal with is my own accountability to myself. If I make sense to myself then I keep doing it. If I don't make sense, I don't do it. Then I do something else.

WS George was saying something about that in terms of doing a magazine, you know, feeling right about what you're doing. If you don't feel right about it then you can't do it.

RM Well, I think the main premise of getting up in the morning is to see if you can have a reasonably good day for your self and that's about as far as I want to go with it, really.

WS Are you happy with what you've done? Do you feel content as a creative individual?

RM I don't really feel content, particularly.

WS Do you feel discontent?

RM I think art has to do with tension.

WS So you try to maximize tension in your life?

RM I try to find an understandable, reasonable level to deal with. There are limits to it.



# OPEN STUDIO VIDEO PROJECT

STATION #HILL RD BARRYTOWN, NY 12507 tel. (914) 758 6308

WS Do you think you sacrifice doing your work if it teaches?

RM This again: my own work is all these things. See, that's the problem.

WS You have a very mature attitude towards it. Some people don't have a division in their lives. They go to work and do work, and then they do their art.

RM I decided a long time ago when I was working in the factories that I didn't like the idea of working in a factory and then going home and trying to play. I wanted to find something that made a lot of sense to me on all levels, and it happened to come out being art. It certainly wasn't thought of at the time, but the concept was there.

WS What concept?

RM The concept of finding some way to live your life that was sensible.

WS So your aesthetic embodies your whole life?

RM I don't know how to answer that. My visual aesthetic is part of my life. I have many aesthetics. In essence, basically, I have an aesthetic of living, of how to go about living.

WS So that has to do with the decisions that you make in an ongoing basis.

RM Yeah.

NZ Is that specific to Ralph? I'm not sure why you're asked about

that in regard to decisions.

WS That's how to be what life is about: making decisions.

RM I'd like to jump a track.

WS Floor to me.

RM I'd just like to hear more specifically what was said between you and Ann June when you came up there. Especially your first video to each other some dialogues and what was said.

RM I don't think we talked too much. We talked a lot about the idea of getting together and making a video. We talked a lot about the idea of getting together and making a video. We talked a lot about the idea of getting together and making a video.

WS I'd like to hear more specifically what was said between you and Ann June when you came up there. Especially your first video to each other some dialogues and what was said.

RM I don't think we talked too much. We talked a lot about the idea of getting together and making a video. We talked a lot about the idea of getting together and making a video. We talked a lot about the idea of getting together and making a video.

NZ I don't want to give you claim to having created that.

RM I don't want to claim to have created that.

WS I'd like to hear more specifically what was said between you and Ann June when you came up there. Especially your first video to each other some dialogues and what was said.

for it. It all works out, see.

NZ Do you feel slighted that Ann June took the credit?

RM I don't feel slighted. I don't feel bad about it at all.

WS He has twenty monitors

at bench of old TV sets.

# OPEN STUDIO VIDEO PROJECT

STATION HILL RD BARRYTOWN NY 12507 (e. 9.4) 758 6308

- GH Was the first <sup>7</sup> built at the center?
- RH No, it was built in Tokyo
- GH Was that the same situation, was the idea generated by Nam June and designed by <sup>7</sup>
- RH Yeah, <sup>7</sup> built it and Nam June and irritated <sup>7</sup> and found ways to keep him happy and give him enough money to keep him in the states for a while and make his life as comfortable as he could through whatever moneys I could raise (laughs) It was all the way around that way.
- WS What are some of the developments of the different identifiable phases of the ETC? How did Sherry come in?
- RH Sherry came to live with Ken and was looking for a job. I think she applied to Ken Dominic.
- NZ (to Sherry) What kind of background do you have?
- RH Neil, you didn't let me answer, do you want me to answer or not?
- WS Maybe Sherry should answer.
- RH I do this to Neil all the time, two or three times and then he shuts up for awhile (laughs). She was looking for a job in. I think it was in psychology and (to Sherry) you couldn't find anything, or the things you found you didn't want.
- SM I was overqualified.
- RH You were overqualified. And then I had a secretary, Linda, or one or two inbetween, and you decided to try that, so you came into it. So (to others) she came in and took over, kicked me out. Sherry has a background in psychology.
- WS Sherry, could you say something, personally, in your own words, about what Ralph has just said; how you came into it what you thought about it; how you wanted to develop it; and you know, what happened the way you saw it?
- SM Sure, I came into it. I was somewhat interested already 'cause of knowing Ralph, and obviously I'd been down to the Center many times before I actually started to work there. I had no background in television at all. I'd never seen the format television. I never even conceived of myself as wanting to be anything to do with a machine like that. They told me I had no way to run them, I couldn't run a tape recorder, I didn't know how to run a film camera, or project it, or anything like that.
- NZ But in studying psychology, did you come across studies which involved analyzing some specific mental function with, you know, looking at the wave form?
- SM Many moons later
- WS Your question is taking <sup>her</sup> off the track, it was a bad question.
- NZ well I'm just curious. I saw you were afraid of the machines, but taking psychology to the masters level, I would just guess that you would come across, you know, the scientific process would bring you to, you know, some kind of initiation with the aids of technology which now seem to be filling up the experimental television center.

# OPEN STUDIO VIDEO PROJECT

STATION HILL RD BARRYTOWN NY 12507 tel. (9 4) 758-6308

- SM Well I tend to have an analytical framework, I think, in the way that I think about things, but I didn't know enough at that point to really understand how that kind of way of looking at things could make any kind of contribution to the Center.
- WS You realize you must have felt that you had a contribution, that you were needed in that situation because you went into it with like a total energy.
- SM Yeah, and one of the things that initially interested me, personally, was working with kids in video, and I did quite alot of that.
- RH I thought you were trying to figure out a way to fuck me. (laughs)
- SM (laughing) I'm much more discreet than to say that
- WS She was trying to work with the kids, Ralph, you got it wrong.
- SM Actually I was interested in accruing power, haha. No, I was interested, really, in the kids, and working with kids, and seeing what kids could do. But I'd also, through school, taken alot of art courses and was very interested in art, and met Nam June at the Center and was very interested in that specific aspect of it. And as the Center tended more and more in that direction...
- WS So what was the first tangible thing that you did when you started to make a commitment to the Center? What did you start to do?
- SM I typed (laughs) and filed.
- WS So how many years have you been working together, then, on the center, what was the year that you entered?
- SM I started about '71.
- WS So that's '71 to '79. That's like seven years. What were the exciting things that started happening? I mean, that must have been a very dynamic thing when Sherry came in and you started having a real interaction.
- RH Well Sherry I don't think it was a real organization, we always had a real organization.
- WS But she brought alot with her.
- RH Well I don't know, not initially. She just came in and started typing, and taking care of the correspondence.
- WS (to Sherry) What do you have to say about that?
- SM It's not a very romantic point of view but it's accurate.
- WS (laughing) Well, I mean, we're in a post-romantic period. Well what were some of the highlights, I mean, what was the sense of exhilaration? You put it in a very distant part of your mind, but there must have been a sense that what we were doing was, as we have a sense in trying to get a possible magazine together we have a sense of alot of energy and alot of things that we're putting together, actually.
- SM Have that sense?
- SM We still have that sense.
- WS Well say something about that.
- RH The idea of the Experimental Television Center is that it's an experimental television center. It's a place to experiment and to evolve in and deal with ideas. It has always been that, ever since I started it, and it always will be that or else I'll close it.
- WS It will close, it will close, it will lose.
- RH I don't want to turn into a service organization like Park, or something like that that hands out equipment. That was never the premise





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WS (cont.)...mention.

RH All the other things I didn't mention is the problem of the fifth category of nonexistence, or something. But I think you can come to that kind of a decision, like, first of all, documentation. It took me a long time to figure that one out. It seems to me that you can go about gathering information in particular ways, and somehow it comes up as an understanding in the person who is gathering the information, hopefully a clear understanding of what the information is, of the event or the experience--I keep going back to the idea of experience through television or through the video camera or whatever.

WS And that happens differently in these different categories because the content is different.

RH Well I think the most abused category is the documentation area. So many people are making snappy little entertainment shows and calling them documentaries.

WS Where is the line for you between art and entertainment?

RH A thought. It has an intensive thought ...

WS An intensive thought-- what do you mean, intensive thought?

RH I have to use examples of it, I suppose. I think somebody can take my machine and make something pretty, a good track in it and run off and sell it, which may be the reason that they do it. Or, I think somebody might use my machine to develop ideas and ideas that are important to them and important for them to understand. I think there is a different intent there, there's very little work carried to the first one.

GS That makes a lot of sense to me, that art differs from other forms. I call it, what, "intensive thought" and communication of that's what the prejudice is in that it is intentional and purposeful. And it's the quality of consciousness that is in it. It's the environment with the medium that I differ from the other in that the artist is a method for an audience or for an effect or for a idea.

RH Or to make a living.

GS Or to make money, whatever, for, for, for whatever.

RH The same idea, think, call it something else, something that

WS What do you mean?

RH Well I think a content person who deals with science who is doing a lot of what they are doing, it's not the same as an artist. These problems and problems, it's not the same as the artist that artist does.

WS How's that?

RH Just the way I said it, I mean I don't know how..

WS The quality of the work that is in it, the quality of the work that is in it.

NZ Intention

GS Intention, yeah

For the sake of the problem, in solving it, or for the sake of raising a dollar in going on to the next big project in building the building.

So what

RH ...

... your picture for national television

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- WS That's what Carl Andre said about mountains. He said the reason he climbed them was because they were there-- and that's the artistic in him, too, I suppose. And the other intention is to climb them because of something that you get from getting to the top.
- MS The problem is is there a reason to get out of bed in the morning
- RH That's a little bit unclear, uh, part of the reason to climb the mountain is to feel what it's like to go up the mountain. If you're climbing the mountain only to get your name in the paper or to meet the man at the top to take your picture, or something like this, then I think that's a different intention. But the artists, or the arts, or the sciences, I think are very well served over this.
- WS Art intention is very goal oriented, it's self satisfying.
- RH It's incredibly goal oriented. The goal is to find out more about what you're curious about. It's a hell of a goal, as far as I'm concerned. (laughs)
- WS And that relates to experimental because it's a kind of correlation there
- RH Yeah, yeah.
- JS There's always the residue of the old debate between art for art's sake and art for a purpose. And those are such crude terms in which to state the case, that when one is forced to use one or the other it appears, always, as though one is reviving an old point of view, or that one's point of view could be real to some extent as an art for art's sake point of view and then go on in the context of a general history. On the other hand, the issue as it was raised when the art for art's sake point of view was being debated, was not very subtle in relation to the whole question of what a medium is, and what the potential for it is, as well as that. I think this is the distinction that's very hard for people who haven't worked a long time with a medium where you actually feel your way around it, with something that's coming out with its medium, all your intention is for it to do things that come from the medium itself rather than a system of ideas or a set of intentions imposed on it.
- RH The art for art's sake point of view is that one, the first one, never made a hell of a lot of sense to me
- MS I don't know of anyone who really said that and what they mean by it
- RH The idea of intention for its own sake, just a little bit because you're always being affected, you are affected by the art for art's sake, but the kind of art for art's sake that I was talking about is not a statement as to a premeditation of the kind of view afterward that it seems I mean a method was happened and it was a method that I would use or with whatever it was, what or it could be a method that happens to be. It's like that, that's a little bit of what you called experimentation, the experimental is to see what happens that the very act of being involved in it is a method, a method of itself, of the very act of being involved in it, that's what I mean, that's what I mean for art's sake. It's the idea of a method of art's sake, of building a case around your activity
- JS Art for art's sake, as opposed to art, art for what sake, for what art for art's sake, art for art's sake, art for art's sake, art for art's sake



Ralph Hooking and Sherry Miller interview

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RV (cont.)...may go along with some of that.

Ralph, do you perform your artistic activity ever thinking that people are monitoring your activity, as you do?

RA Start over again

You perform the activity as an artist. I'm just curious if you're.

RV Well I'm getting really tired of, well, go ahead.

I'm just curious if you ever act with the fact that there are people who are monitoring your activities your students, or the New York State Council of the Arts...

WS Your public, your public

RH I'm not a performer. I'm not a performer at all. I have no intention and no ability as far as that is concerned.

WS But this is a performance, Ralph, right here you're involved in a performance.

RH I'm sitting here in front of my fireplace, and I'm sitting here shitting the shit with you...

WS But you've got an audience. We're here

RH I have an audience every place I go, man.....

This is a dialogue

RH And I'm not performing for them.

WS But it's more than a dialogue because there are more than two people involved.

GG Well who's the audience, but who is the audience? It is a non-constant audience.

WS We're all everything at once.

GG Right, but in a performance one thinks of a situation in which one person performs for an audience, or a group of people perform for....

WS No, a performance can be multi-layered.

RH That's right, and it can be intended to be a performance, and this is not intended to be a performance.

GG Right, well that brackets it, that frames it; that frame isn't here Ralph I remember an evening when you invited me down to the center along with a bunch of other people and showed some of your work. I remember... that is what I'm doing, that is what I'm interested in... was that performance?

RH It was closer to a performance except that that that's opening to me is this idea of teaching as getting a free my mind to point where I try to logically structure what I'm doing. I don't know what I'm going to say, who may be involved in what I'm about or what I'm talking about. I still do it that I'm dealing with performance in the classic sense of trying to...

WS Performance with stigma

RH No, in the classic sense of trying to take something from one point to another. I'll be a structure as that in an idea, a form I'll go into it and hope something happens. I never know, never have anything on paper or anything to remind me of anything.

WS Now at a more general category, called communication.

RH Well, you could see that I'm trying to communicate right now, yeah I agree with that. It's very broad.

WS But there are different levels of the task, and I want to get closer, I want to define...

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RM You want to define communication?

WS No no, I want to isolate different areas of communication that you may go through as a creative individual, from when you get up down to when you go to sleep. And there are different qualities of communicating, or different situations in communicating and some of them are personal, some of them are performance. And I sympathize with his trying to force you into a position where you acknowledge a certain change in intention, or an accommodation to a situation where you get into what I would call a performance situation, too. And I want to qualify that by asking you about different levels of how you see yourself as a communicative individual.

94. Let me try another tact in that, maybe it'll make sense, maybe it won't. I try, consciously, to deal with myself and deal with other people as easily and simply and forthrightly as I can. I don't have any sense of position, really. When in a while it crops up, but normally I can get that out of myself. I try to, again, put it in the middle. I don't have any sense to me. It's

W5 I think all of us have that feeling, to have that feeling.

Q: I have a letter from the author of the book. I have a  
 copy of the letter. I have a copy of the letter.

WS To what y have just said . . . I'm not at all new, are

BH: In the more formal trial what I did in the

WS When you refer to that situation?

RH Right.

WS But it's not a law, it's a rule. It's a rule, it's a rule,  
it's a rule, it's a rule, it's a rule, it's a rule, it's a rule,

[illegible]

1971 4 1 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188 189 190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198 199 200 201 202 203 204 205 206 207 208 209 210 211 212 213 214 215 216 217 218 219 220 221 222 223 224 225 226 227 228 229 230 231 232 233 234 235 236 237 238 239 240 241 242 243 244 245 246 247 248 249 250 251 252 253 254 255 256 257 258 259 260 261 262 263 264 265 266 267 268 269 270 271 272 273 274 275 276 277 278 279 280 281 282 283 284 285 286 287 288 289 290 291 292 293 294 295 296 297 298 299 300 301 302 303 304 305 306 307 308 309 310 311 312 313 314 315 316 317 318 319 320 321 322 323 324 325 326 327 328 329 330 331 332 333 334 335 336 337 338 339 340 341 342 343 344 345 346 347 348 349 350 351 352 353 354 355 356 357 358 359 360 361 362 363 364 365 366 367 368 369 370 371 372 373 374 375 376 377 378 379 380 381 382 383 384 385 386 387 388 389 390 391 392 393 394 395 396 397 398 399 400 401 402 403 404 405 406 407 408 409 410 411 412 413 414 415 416 417 418 419 420 421 422 423 424 425 426 427 428 429 430 431 432 433 434 435 436 437 438 439 440 441 442 443 444 445 446 447 448 449 450 451 452 453 454 455 456 457 458 459 460 461 462 463 464 465 466 467 468 469 470 471 472 473 474 475 476 477 478 479 480 481 482 483 484 485 486 487 488 489 490 491 492 493 494 495 496 497 498 499 500 501 502 503 504 505 506 507 508 509 510 511 512 513 514 515 516 517 518 519 520 521 522 523 524 525 526 527 528 529 530 531 532 533 534 535 536 537 538 539 540 541 542 543 544 545 546 547 548 549 550 551 552 553 554 555 556 557 558 559 560 561 562 563 564 565 566 567 568 569 570 571 572 573 574 575 576 577 578 579 580 581 582 583 584 585 586 587 588 589 590 591 592 593 594 595 596 597 598 599 600 601 602 603 604 605 606 607 608 609 610 611 612 613 614 615 616 617 618 619 620 621 622 623 624 625 626 627 628 629 630 631 632 633 634 635 636 637 638 639 640 641 642 643 644 645 646 647 648 649 650 651 652 653 654 655 656 657 658 659 660 661 662 663 664 665 666 667 668 669 670 671 672 673 674 675 676 677 678 679 680 681 682 683 684 685 686 687 688 689 690 691 692 693 694 695 696 697 698 699 700 701 702 703 704 705 706 707 708 709 710 711 712 713 714 715 716 717 718 719 720 721 722 723 724 725 726 727 728 729 730 731 732 733 734 735 736 737 738 739 740 741 742 743 744 745 746 747 748 749 750 751 752 753 754 755 756 757 758 759 760 761 762 763 764 765 766 767 768 769 770 771 772 773 774 775 776 777 778 779 780 781 782 783 784 785 786 787 788 789 790 791 792 793 794 795 796 797 798 799 800 801 802 803 804 805 806 807 808 809 810 811 812 813 814 815 816 817 818 819 820 821 822 823 824 825 826 827 828 829 830 831 832 833 834 835 836 837 838 839 840 841 842 843 844 845 846 847 848 849 850 851 852 853 854 855 856 857 858 859 860 861 862 863 864 865 866 867 868 869 870 871 872 873 874 875 876 877 878 879 880 881 882 883 884 885 886 887 888 889 890 891 892 893 894 895 896 897 898 899 900 901 902 903 904 905 906 907 908 909 910 911 912 913 914 915 916 917 918 919 920 921 922 923 924 925 926 927 928 929 930 931 932 933 934 935 936 937 938 939 940 941 942 943 944 945 946 947 948 949 950 951 952 953 954 955 956 957 958 959 960 961 962 963 964 965 966 967 968 969 970 971 972 973 974 975 976 977 978 979 980 981 982 983 984 985 986 987 988 989 990 991 992 993 994 995 996 997 998 999 1000 1001 1002 1003 1004 1005 1006 1007 1008 1009 1010 1011 1012 1013 1014 1015 1016 1017 1018 1019 1020 1021 1022 1023 1024 1025 1026 1027 1028 1029 1030 1031 1032 1033 1034 1035 1036 1037 1038

[illegible][illegible]

Why? I think it's because we're all so busy.

$\frac{1}{\sqrt{\pi}} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} f(x) e^{-x^2} dx = \frac{1}{\sqrt{\pi}} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} f(x) e^{-x^2} dx$

[illegible]

wasn't performance it was a demonstration.  
An exhibition

rf 73 x 4 v y i l l x h t z s w l l r x  
t l l n e

$\frac{d}{dt} \left( \frac{\partial L}{\partial \dot{x}} \right) = \frac{\partial L}{\partial x}$

"I'm doing what I do."

re: me to the ...

*[Faint handwritten notes at the bottom of the page]*

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RH (cont.)...to continue.

WS But you can have silence, too. You can have a few minutes of silence there.

RM Yeah I accept that, too. And we do do that, that does happen. But you do come to a point where you feel that if you don't get get some stimulants then you're not going to come up with anything.

GH Speaking of stimulants .

WS What kind of stimulants.

SH Yang?

GR I thought maybe we could break and look at some tapes.

15 I thought maybe we could break the ice a little. (inaudible)  
16 No no. Well wait, I just want to ask one more question. (inaudible)  
17 joking), there's a little bit of a lopsidedness about it all be-  
18 cause Fear has something to say and you're trying to say something  
19 I'm interested in trying orientation, orient the dialogue a little  
20 bit more comprehensively by asking you, perfectly well, what  
21 at all, we have been in terms of it, what you've seen. I  
22 what are the high points? What are the things that have  
23 been to it. I'm not sure, I'm not sure, I'm not sure. the  
24 high points?

Q Now, I know you're thinking, a lot of people  
A don't know what I'm saying. I don't tend to think of things that  
I don't tend to think of--related to it, because, I do, I know  
you have the problem of trying to find a level of what to stay  
there, and I just don't think you realize that I've got many  
high points and so many low points in my many middle points that  
I don't remember them all, and I don't really find the things  
that some people do find, and I just don't know if I'm capable of  
this.

W5: Yes, Peer Bode, would you concur with that observation? Is your experience in what you've put together or would you say that you could infer as high point, that there are certain things that are, you know, that you could point to as being 'important'?

PR you know, that you could point to a particular conversation  
it's difficult for me to answer. It is to put it another con-  
versation, like we dealing with my situation and my involvement.

AS well, if it's a discipline it might be upon for every one to try something new, and if you want to answer the question of a right to be able to. If you don't want to answer it then you don't have to. We can say something about it high in its own right as an art of class, out of a freeze in time. I mean we don't need new ways to get to the very center, and referring to some of the things in the world, then it's a kind of a really say - it's the kind of the way a guy who's making a do something does. It's a very art of class approach to making something in time. It's a very art of class approach to making something in time. It's a very art of class approach to making something in time. It's a very art of class approach to making something in time.

down. It necessarily, I mean, I'm not defending, in a quest on about high points, but I think it's interesting that it came up because I think that it's exactly what's often not about. When we are asked to state that in the past, one feels a resistance coming from that which creates the thing that we're talking about, maybe a high point is a peak experience. It's something that stands out of the course of life by its separateness from that. It's not if you might say so

Ralph Mocking and Sherry Miller Interview :/6/79

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WJ (cont.)...someone as long ago as Alfred said, that all experience is exceptional and that we are trapped in a network of created language in which we don't notice the exceptionality of everything that is, and so we make them less exceptional exceptions, ordinary legal kinds of realities (laughter). And by the elimination of, and I mean I am now inserting this, by the elimination of the expectation of high points, one moves away from sex for the purpose of orgasm or something for the purpose of getting to this-- whatever it happens to be which is also the end of it, also the death of it, and moves into the area of a live middle, of a medial region in which exceptions are everywhere-

WS Finish what you're saying

PD Let me ask you a question

WS No don't ask him a question, let him finish

GQ Go ahead, go ahead

PD You bring up sex; sex is a good way to discuss high points.

GQ Right

PD Do you remember the best sex you ever had?...probably not, I mean... Well see, you're asking me for a high point view of sex, and when you ask that question, um, I mean I can remember extravagant kinds of experiences, but then if I ask myself what is it in the nature of sex that compels me to want to think about it a whole lot, uh, it's not that. In fact, as I grow older and I hope deeper in my awareness...

WH Wisdom

GQ Wisdom, whatever, I lose my interest in that kind of excitation and deepen my interest in something that comes into play.

PD What's a high point? A high point to me is an abstraction of thought not "gee this was really a great day, 1974..."

WH High point is a really lousy description of...

PD It's really bad

KI ...and this isn't, I'm not trying to attack you or anything

WS I'm going to defend myself, don't worry

RH No, in terms of high point, think you can find, if you want to talk about specific issues in specific times, the idea of pivotal point, perhaps, makes more sense to me than high point.

WS It's similar for me

KI I can find things that have changed my life in particular ways.

WS Okay, rather than defend my high point notion, let's talk about your pivotal points.

KI My pivotal points. The problem with my pivotal points is the same or better as my high points. I don't remember a last orgasm, nor do I.

WS That would be a problem, I would say

RH Well it isn't to me at all. No, there's no sense in trying to remember them, I just want to have another one and I also can't remember the last time, except I suppose I can remember the last time I was, so can't. I've been so damn depressed lately I can't remember the last time I was depressed either.

SM (laugh) asked the question at a bad time

RH But I've had orgasms and depressions in the last few days and I don't remember either one of them. So I don't deal with the extreme very well, I tend to cut them... I want the extremes, I'm after that all the time, but I.







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RM ...{trying to find place in tape...}

PD Can you reproduce tape footage counts on that? Can you actually get away with-- I've never been able to use a footage counter on...

RM If you use one machine then you can use a counter

PD I've never even been able to do it on one machine

WS Even sawing machines are not compatible--same serial numbers, no...

PD Do they make them on the same serial numbers?

WS 1800, 2600, 2950...

{machine hum and rumble...}

WS My high point is a low peak, you know, I'm going really downhill.

I like to put alot of energy into it for a short period of time and then relax. But you don't, so you can, you know, carry on.

GQ I like alot of time. It takes me alot of time to really get what he calls the intent of the work. Generally it's very very important...

WS We have two approaches. One of them can go like that and one can go like that, and catch more that way.

{more hum and burble...}

WS {cont.}...no but I agree with you.

JQ I mean just to respect the work...

WS Sure, you're point is well taken. I have to over-emphasize it.

GQ Well Ralph, does that tape have a name? I mean I'd like to be able to refer to it in my mind.

RM It's got a number

GQ What is the number?

RM Wait, it does have a name-- the Legs tape--"Legs Tape II" or something like that.. Will somebody get the light?

{after the tape...}

GQ "Legs Tape II" we're talking about...Gary--go...

WS Leg I, leg II...

GQ Owego {laughs}

RM The first legs tape was called "Scrambled Legs", unfortunately.

{laughter in chaotically inaudible conversation}

GH You've been working with the human form, and controlling, dealing with gray levels of an image, and what seems like a contrast of a human form, biomorphic form generated and for me, there seems to be...

I'm just wondering how you feel about that very large area between the generated forms--in other words, the very hard lines and that very curved line and ..

WS Right along the gray tone scale?

RM The first tape that I showed you which had the generated image in direct relation to the human image is very confusing to me right now. This tape has, I don't really see the shapes as being there than treatments to the basic structure of what she is and what she, how she reacts and what she does. I don't see it as a different thing.

GQ In other words, the intention there is not with forms but the interaction of movements with control.

RM The intention is both, is for Sherry to realize what she's about in terms of making shapes, and for me to realize about how the machine structures things so I can structure at the same time.

WS It's a collaboration

RM It's a very collaborative thing--most of our tapes are.

WS So you feel, Sherry, that it's a fair collaboration, do you feel that you are satisfying yourself as ...

SM Oh, absolutely.

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- WS It's important to understand that in terms of words, because I don't think that comes, necessarily, across to me in the tape.
- RH Well there are a lot of problems that people are having with the human form, particularly when men work with women's forms. There's the tradition of using the woman as an object, and I don't think that at any time either one of us is considering that as part of what we were doing. Often Sherry will sit still in something, but sometimes that's because she likes to get into that shape, or perhaps she doesn't know what she's going to do.
- WS So you monitor out what...
- GQ Can you see the video screen?
- SM Always.
- GQ Always, I see. So it really is a dialogue in that sense.
- RH Oh yeah, that's part of the whole project, that's what video can do.
- WS Are you looking at the same monitor or two different monitors?
- SM There are two different monitors
- RH They're set exactly the same. They are both transmissions of the same model, they look exactly the same...
- WS But you and I know that what comes across is different
- RH Well I don't accept that at all, no. I think you can set up two monitors very close and very equal
- WS But not exact because they are two different things
- GQ That's not relevant to this question
- RH Yeah really, you're splitting hairs
- WS Yeah, true, true
- GQ I mean they are different people also
- RH Right, I mean, my brain computes differently than hers does
- GQ We don't know what "same" means in two perceptual systems anyway
- WS One of the things that I find interesting about video is while I've always posited that what I see is the same that everyone else sees, I've recently lived in an environment with two television monitors (Doug Schwenecker gave me one) and I started playing them together. And I realized that those two situations-- one was a nine inch Sony and the other was a very large Panasonic-- and what I was seeing-- I was watching a film-- were two totally different experiences...
- RH Very different. But my point in this is we had two twelve inch transmissions...
- WS You're right, I was splitting a bit, but I think a lot of hairs could be split, but not in this conversation
- GQ Could we return back to what you were doing there (to Gary)
- GH I had more or less finished that, but I have another question which gets real specific, and I don't know--
- WS But that's good
- GQ Yeah, go, please...
- GH I may be wrong in actually how it was done, but I noticed that where this question arose, as far as the electronic forms and the morphic forms.
- RH The sound and the.
- GH No, not the sound, but was where... it looked as if you had an oscillator locked to horizontal sine, you know, the vertical bars. And you were then controlling the oscillator, which was loaded, with a snake

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GH (cont.)...which created that...

RR former synthe

GH Right, And that became almost like a third element. I sort of got confused at that point. It became like a third element which I almost wanted to see more clearly because it was a very interesting element for me and that's where the question...

Those lines are edges, actually, they are not lines. Those are the edges of each of the panels that are set up in the switcher, so that the panel, itself, the whole shape is actually moving

GQ The whole what?

WS I think this is really interesting. I think we should get it into a depth, but I think you should describe the system that you set up so we can understand what the reference point is in terms of his analysis of it

GH I might be able to clarify it. There were two areas where that was taking place; one where the shapes sort of happened like this (gesticulates); another where it really whacked out

RR The lines bleed through sometimes in the keying process

WS Explain so someone can...what is the keying process?

RR What is the keying process?

WS Yeah, for somebody who doesn't know anything about technology, explain it

RR I spent days doing that to my students

WS Well we know something about it. If you were explaining for me how the system was set up...I can understand that...

RR I had two keyers-

WS You had two keyers, what kind of keyers?

RR Jones prototypes

WS Modified?

RR Modified many times

GH You should have a look at it.

RR Every time he looks at them again he modifies them again. Yeah, they're prototype structures. They have no beginning or end.

WS And what do they feed into, the three cameras? You had three cameras?

RR In that particular setup I think we had three cameras, yeah

WS Okay so the three cameras fed into the two keyers, you sent the signals?

RR Not necessarily. They may have fed into the switching video bus, and then into the keyer. I don't remember exactly how I set it up, but basically what the structure were were two keyers and two switchers-- one sent the horizontal, one sent the vertical-- three cameras, and one or two channels going through the Park-Auto colorizer. I'm not sure whether...

WS What about the sound?

RR The sound came from a synthe.

WS You just plugged it in? Straight?

RR I generated the sound from the synthe, and there were two leads from the synthe going to the control points on two of the oscillators I was using to control the switches, and then the sound goes directly into the audio inputs on the deck

W lobby, is your concern with Ralph's patch..

WS I'm just trying to understand it from a technical point of view

RR You won't understand it unless...



# OPEN STUDIO VIDEO PROJECT

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- RH You are representing, as a computer, a control, uh. . .
- GQ Right, movement toward consensual vocabulary that can be recognized on repeatable...
- RH Not necessarily, really, it's...
- GQ That "not necessarily" interests me very much
- RH We have such an open ended system. And, you know, I've been thinking about the computer, that it would be almost impossible to reproduce unless you set up extreme parameters in your initial notation. It would be almost impossible to reproduce anything anyway
- PD I don't think you want to do that. I mean I don't think you want to set up those extreme parameters
- RH I don't want to do that, no. Woody's moving toward an idea of post, uh...
- PD I think that's a foolish idea
- RH I don't think so. I think it's a different idea
- PD Well different but foolish from the point of- that it's...
- GQ But from what you said earlier, his systems are sort of adhoc. They exist for the circumstance of a particular representation, and then he goes on with a new problem, so that it's openended in the possibilities he presents to himself
- PD Not in that short a time, though. I would say that what Woody and Stan are doing are the kind of systems that last three or four days and stop there. And maybe if you resurrect it again in a month or two...
- RH George, I can give you a clue on this, maybe. If you take a system, say, we'll take Woody's system. Woody's system is a self-contained system that generates all the signals, and that's extreme. I'm not, it doesn't do that, but it can do that, perhaps. It can generate all the shapes all the characters and all the things that you need within the system so that you don't need to plug anything into it. In fact, there's no place to plug anything into. Two people who build systems this way-
- WS It's a weakness
- RH It's locked off. It's called a piano. Or it's called a locked off system where you can do only with what you have there. The systems that I'm working with are so openended that I could not go back and reset the camera in the position I had it in in order to reproduce what I had before. So I'm not worried about this stuff
- IQ Right
- WS Is Woody's a one-way situation?
- RH Is it one way? I don't know what you mean by that
- WS Well, I was trying to take it from what you said. And yours is a two-way system. I was trying to...
- RH Woody's, I'm using it as an example, is really not that way because you can't...
- WS I know, I understand what you said but I wasn't trying to hold that to categories. What I was trying to make was a differential understanding between what you're...
- RH I think there are places for both of these systems
- WS I was trying to define the two systems by saying one-way two-way, and then if that was... I'm, uh, not... it depends on... it depends on what you're doing... it depends on the fact that

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STATION HILL RD BARRTOWN, NY 12507 tel. (914) 758-6308

WS It's one way

RH It can hit this with that kind of touch, then you'll get that kind of tone. If you hit 'em both harder, then...

WS It's an input system

GH It gives, maybe not to the degree of other things, but it still gives you a physical sensation...

WS Is a piano a one or a two-way system?

RH I don't know. I think my machine's a one-way system because all I come up with is one signal. That's all I come up with. A piano is a one-way system because all you come up with is the sound it produces. Everything is a one-way system that way

GH Yeah but the piano has feedback

WS Yeah well you have to talk to...

RH No, the question you've proposed is interesting because it all comes out with one thing. It's always a one-way system

GH Yeah but I think what he's talking about, I think, as far as two-way one-way systems, is the process of what's happening before the sound comes out. In other words, maybe working with such a complex machine is a two-way system, but a piano, to me, is just a lower degree of a two-way system, as far as feedback goes. But it still does have a feedback

RH Well you hear it, yeah

GH You hear it, but there is the feeling of the feet when they press down on the things, the hands, the body as connected to the piano as an extension

RH First we're talking about signal flow, which is what I understood Willoby to say, and now we're talking about something else and I don't quite understand

WS That's what's interesting about the metaphor of a piano, because I can throw it out there and you can think of it in one sense and he can think of it in another sense

RH Well you can throw dogs out here and I'll figure out whether they shit and eat, too

WS But a piano is a better metaphor in what we're dealing with than dogs

RH Okay, but I don't know how it relates at all

WS No, well I didn't say it was great just threw it out

GH I can elaborate on that. The only reason I threw that out was because I was trying to clarify what you were saying about two-way systems. And I think you were talking about the process not what was at the other end and what came out

WS Right, add on to that

GH I think what makes a machine like the video machine located upstairs more of a two-way system is ~~because~~ the feedback and the two-way system process of making decisions and everything is more complex. It's more sophisticated than a piano. It has more variables

WS I'm thinking also of a return, there's a return. If you measure systems, you measure them by their efficacy in terms of the... the way of measuring them is by their return, and I'm interested in that, I think that the ~~same~~ in a two-way system. I don't think there are many things that are only one-way systems. I think there are two-way systems, even if it's just a feedback loop

the feedback loop

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- WS (cont.)...the different stratifications of what we're talking about
- RH When I started talking about this, what I was talking about was a closed system and an open system, which is different than one-way two-way
- WS But I'll slide into talking whatever you want to talk about because it's fascinating, closed and open systems or one-way two-way systems, I think they relate
- RH The only thing about closed systems is that, usually, you can't put external devices into them
- WS Like this piano
- RH No. Yeah, like the piano
- WS Right, and that's what I'm coming back...there's alot here
- GH But that also comes in, I mean piano, for me...
- WS No, not the piano, the piano. We're talking about, not the piano. We got to pianos because you made a reference to the word, to his box as a piano
- RH Well let me tell you, let me carry that a little further. What started out to do was to take all the knobs off his machines so that he couldn't enter or control his machine except through the computer. That was his idea. In fact, I can remember long conversations with Woody and David to the point where...
- WS David?
- RH David Jones, to the point where he would build him a thing that didn't have any kinds of knobs on it at all. So David said "can we have a box" (where you put a screw driver down and twist something just to get things up.) And Woody said "no, darling, I don't think we need that either." So Woody's ideal at that time was to develop a box that had just control from wherever you control the computer from, that's usually the keyboard, and that was it. But, in fact, what he's done is he's got the most open-ended pile of shit up there I ever saw in my life and it's going all over the place. Now it's conceivable to me that you can develop a situation where you're generating video signals, or you're generating signals that can be used by video in a box that has nothing else put into it. And I think this is a reasonable way to go for certain circumstances, particularly in terms of teaching and learning things about the stuff. It's less confusing.
- WS I think you clarified it alot better and I understand alot more now, after you said that, what you said before. And we have to almost go through all this piano thing to get that clarity of ..
- RH Okay
- GH Do you think that's so? Because in that sense, more, there are no knobs. It's there and the only way you can reach it is through a language. And that's why it's better for teaching because language, then, is a shared language
- RH No I don't think that's particularly true. In fact, I probably wouldn't even use it for teaching. I'm just saying there's a possibility it might be easier to use for teaching
- GH Well I'm just making, you know..
- RH Notational idea in video has been one that Walter and I have talked about for years, now. And I can see it through Walter's viewpoint, but he really wants to perform with video, so he would like to





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RM (cont.).. The easiest thing on earth is to take video in colors and in shapes and put some sound to it of music or anything you want to. This is a thoughtless process.

GQ This is exactly the issue that I was driving at before. Actually..

RM That's what most people see and that's why...

WS There are very few people that do it well

GQ But the real problem is to develop perception and attention to a point where you have a situation of complex language where it's accurate. There's an accuracy that arises with--how do you deal with the condition of accuracy that keeps the attention alive? When you have that vast number of possibilities, I mean this is the question not the fact that it can't be done or is not being done, but this is the question which I think someone in the outside of process-video has to ask. A composer friend of mine, Ellis Yarnen, spoke of grand synthesis as a field in which very little of importance had happened because he felt that the possibilities were so numerous, that eventually one was giving over all the time to very many choices so that the attention of the viewer is not sustained to a level of what was interesting.

RM Well, let's say you start to really want you know about visual schemes that you're used to. Normally, you're working with a two dimensional surface, so you start to say, all right what are the constructs that I'm dealing with here? I'm implied three dimensional, I'm dealing with color, I'm dealing with all these very basic things that people have dealt with for years on a two dimensional surface, and I apply these to them and try to find a way to come up with the additional problem of time

WS Do you see yourself, Ralph as a traditional artist?

RM I don't know what that question means. William

RM Well I'll clarify it by telling you that Davidson told me that he was a traditional artist and that his inspiration came from a certain identifiable part of art history. He had certain references that he felt were traditional, and he felt that that was a strong part of his work and he was a traditional artist. And I had no thought of video and tradition in those ways before, but he stimulated me to think about it and I thought I'd ask you.

RM I'm a product of my prior knowledge as we are, which is a terrible answer, but I'll let me say a little bit. I've myself video with some stuff that's not traditional, for me at least, that has to do with of.

WS Do you see yourself as a pioneer, as the start of something new or the end of...

RM That's a high point, right? Right?

WS I don't see I'm into making it or avoid the question of what the end of something is or the end of something is something. I have fantasies

RM I think it's somewhere in the middle of the beginning. I have fantasies about what the kinds of things I have could, how they could affect the world

WS That's what it's to be a... what are they? Well, is

RM Well, yeah, I think a visual realization as painting has become for a lot of people. Instead of a representation of something that was. It can be an experience in

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RH (cont.)...itself

WS Both the end of something else and the beginning of something new, it has both.

~~RH I'm not sure about that~~

WS You see the thing that interests me about what Davidson said was he related to the painting. He talked about nineteenth century Hudson Valley, and you just made a relationship to it...

RH I don't have that sense of continuity. I have a sense of having learned some certain things from some things I've seen in the past, but I don't have a sense of being a part of a continuing of greatness or anything like that.

WS Well I think you're referring to...

WS Not greatness. Greatness had nothing to do with it. It was just a tradition, a tradition. It wasn't a value...it was just... he saw himself as a part.

RH If you see yourself in a tradition then you're seeing yourself in greatness.

WS Yes, yes. No, no. You can see yourself in a tradition of drunken failures.

RH Well...

WS I don't think that's a tradition.

WS Well (laughs) you don't know my family (laughs alot)

PD Who is this Davidson?

WS What David... are you talking about?

WS Davidson... Is that pronunciation right?

WS I don't know. I knew a Daniel Davidson, and I'm just trying to figure out if this is the guy.

WS Well this is a reference that I understand.

PD I don't understand.

WS Oh I, what I thought it was important to mention that when I was asked who was going to be in the video...

WS I'm not sure about that. I might be in it, but I'm not sure.

WS I'm not sure about that. I might be in it, but I'm not sure.

WS your coming in for this point.

WS all let him come in (laughs)

WS commercial, commercial, go on, go on.

WS Just to find you're existed (laughs)

WS I'm sitting over here now.

WS Yeah so I just want to add something to that and say if you feel the

sophisticated machinery to be able to work within that area with those things. It's also something that doesn't necessarily refer to, you know, a visual image, okay working with a machine such as that is creating ideas even though you are working with images, and that's what comes out in the end in your tape or something. There's something else involved.

RH deal the complexities of video, and the reason it's becoming, I think, well, everybody's trying to dominate it, everybody's trying to cut into the edges and say "all right this is where it is."

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RM (cont.)...is where it is."  
 WS For me  
 RM Uh,... Jerry McGrady will say video is in the process, it's not in the visionization  
 GQ Who would say that?  
 RM Jerry McGrady said this a couple of times. Woody said this a couple of times. A lot of people have said it. I've said it. I don't believe it, I don't believe it. I think if you're working with video it's not either or, it's an involvement. I'm recently battling with the film makers- Larry Gotheim and Ken Jacobs, Larry particularly I want to teach a course, I want a course taught in our department that sensitizes the individual to how structures are made, how things are put together, what machinery's about, feeling toward the tools that you're working with, which I think is a very sensible and somewhat traditional approach  
 WS Is there a difference between film and video in this course, in the concept? I didn't want to go off base I was just trying to ask a question  
 RM Well, let me think about what I was coming to  
 WS You mentioned film makers and...  
 RM Yeah but I wasn't mentioning film makers per se, I was mentioning a problem with film makers. The problem with Larry Gotheim was what I was talking about. The problem is that we've got a place called Hollywood. Hollywood has developed a structure of not just products but methodology of how you go about dealing with what you're dealing with  
 WS This is your entertainment reference  
 RM Let me come along with a group of people who are not in Hollywood and that are coming from some other place and say, what you don't have to deal with is the equipment and the machinery, what you have to deal with is what you see, and what I'm coming back to is that you have to deal with them both. In the process that I'm involved with video, I have to know something about it. I don't have to know all about it, just something. But I have to know something enough to be able to do what I want to do, the same way painters have to know how brushes work and how paint mixes and stuff like that  
 WS Is that a craft aspect you're talking about?  
 RM Yes, but call it craft, it's a little fuzzier a video because you have to know where the wires are from. You have to know what of things in a system.  
 WS There should be a word that's other than craft that describes that because I think that is a special distinction in that you're referring to there that is special. And it has to do with those people that have and can make the leap from one thing to...  
 RM It's not intuition, it's a learned process. It's a skill that you have to get involved in. And I try to convince my students that you have to deal with it  
 WS And understanding you have to come to...  
 RM And then, say "all I want to deal with is what I see and what I can make this way," and then...  
 WS They can't make it that way...  
 RM They can't make it that way. You're kidding the hell out of the recording, probably, with your white noise





Ralph Hocking and Sherry Miller interview 2/6/79

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RH (cont.)...different in what I can make than anything that I've understood before. So it's a really strong kind of. .

GH Right. The question that follows would be- when you were making pottery, or you were making photographs. I mean you went through a process

RH That's right. Well in the dark room I can go in there, and I understand enough of it that I don't want to understand a hell of alot more about process. I haven't gotten to that point...

GH I don't mean process...

RH Well we have to talk about process, Gary, because . .

WS Still, more...

RH I'm still, like, weekly now I'm coming up with new knowledge that astounds me, that any engineer would have known when he was in the second grade. But that's terribly important to me at the moment because it gives me a further insight into what I'm doing

GH Right but that's processual knowledge because the knowledge is coming at a time when you're ready to use it. So your life is introducing that knowledge into itself at this point rather than having all the technology first as a giant head of the thing and going to then try to do something with it. David Jones runs into that problem sometimes; he knows too goddamned much

RH I've gotten to the point in the darkroom where I don't want to know it a hell of alot more. About the process

GH But is that because it's not alive for you now?

RH I still do it

GH You still do it. I see

GH I think there's a confusion here, though, about doing process.

RH I've locked my structure in the darkroom to the point where I know what developer I'm using, I know what color and I'm using, I know what I'm doing. The only thing I'm concerned about is having my eye deal with it, my mind deal with it, with my eye and my hand level on the same sort of understanding through the whole visual realization. I feel I'm already bored with the process of the darkroom

GH Right but that's

And does the work have a life of its own? Or is it just a way to get away from it all?

RH I was talking about it for a while. I'm not doing it with

... Yeah but I'm not doing it with a lot of feeling

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WS You can't think of a piece without thinking about the video technology. That's what I think differentiates video from a lot of other things. Because when I think of a work, it's a real systems approach. I can't think of any work without thinking of how many monitors, what the switching is, and the whole thing. And most people that look at video don't have any suspicion of what's really happening because they haven't got the experience or the knowledge to understand...

RH Video is such a young thing

WS It's so like blue sky. I mean to get to the systems...

RH The first video major that ever existed in the universe is around here someplace

WS He's really the first?

RH Yeah, he graduated in film

WS If the magazine can begin to kind of delineate this strange consciousness, the video consciousness, that would be really valuable

RH If you want to talk about your magazine, I think the magazine is way ahead of its time. I think you're going to have real problems

WS Whose book?

RH Your magazine, I think is way ahead of its time

WS It is, it is. But we're trying to ground ourselves in a certain sense of tradition, Ralph. That's why we came

(laughter)

RH Well actually, in the process of talking about this, you're creating another kind of tradition. There is a process tradition. There's a tradition of process and a process tradition. A tradition that doesn't become static or rigidify, that doesn't have within itself the attempt to create fixed points of reference but which passes on, if nothing else, the idea of process. When you're taught, in art, you're taught to appreciate products. There's nothing wrong with that but it does encourage a certain kind of product orientation that, in effect, becomes anti-processual so that people are tempted to contrast process and product

RH Take this to a point where you're dealing with a product. You're making a magazine

WS Oh I love products. I think products are wonderful

RH We're in the process now, we're not making a magazine, Ralph, we're making a magazine. We're in the process. That's definitely a process sense of what we're doing and none of us are committed to any kind of product. That's what we're doing. It's not a product, and the magazine will be reflective of that process. I think it won't be valuable because I think I'm beginning to respect, more, the understanding of the nature of the thing itself. I think the process theme is very, very important. It's very wide ranging. There's all kinds of things that

WS Somewhere along the line I've heard that the magazine itself became a product, at that point, that you have to sell

WS Well we hope it will be published, all of us, don't we?

WS Well it's far more intricately related than just that question would suggest. For one thing, we're involved in printing as part of what we are, and publishing, and video, and these things exist in





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- Q (cont.)...it will certainly reflect that
- WS Reflect what? No. I want to know, I want to know. Sorry, I want to know
- Q It's not necessary, Willoby. It's all right. It's really okay. You don't have to worry about it
- WS Reflect what?
- RH Reflect the whole thinking that he's talking about, this whole idea...
- WS And more and more and more
- Tell the and "more" worries me a little bit because I don't want to say everything because I don't know everything, but...
- WS We haven't signed contracts yet, you know. This can't possibly be published without my permission, so... You know you said you didn't know what you were doing, Ralph. We don't know what we're doing. We're all in the same boat
- 4-11 RH Well, I was asked by the governor to develop a structure for a library in the near future or something. And I haven't talked to him about it but one of the people around him asked me "What do you think about a library in the future?" My initial reaction was- throw the books out. If you want a library that's going to function in ways that we currently have, then books have become objects that we don't need
- Q Well I disagree with that very strongly. I think that's a...
- RH Well let me finish this because I think the book, eventually, is going to find its way into the same status that a painting has, or something like this
- WS It already has, Ralph, it already has
- RH And information in the book that is going to become very common in public and through the computer process,
- Q But you're talking about books as information, you're not talking about books as works
- RH Yeah. I'm not talking about books in the way that you're talking about them. I think there's an absolute need for what you're talking about, but I think the information in the book is... well I was in the fiction, man, it was hard to decide to buy a paperback because you would be snubbed by your friends. It had to come in the hard cover
- WS Ralph, if a fair expression of that was translated into something that would come out in print in the magazine that would be expressive of our collective aspirations, what are the range of work that you think might express the title of that magazine? In that work, what a title for a magazine or cited video or a collection to have in 1979? It's a hard question
- Q How do you feel about "Video"??
- RH No no
- WS That was my expression
- PD What's a magazine?
- WS When something comes out periodically and has information in it and has a title
- PD Well a magazine, to me, is a place you store things, totally different magazines...
- Q But see the word as the title for a moment, & I & A
- WS No he has the same reaction
- PD I think it sucks
- RH I think it's kind of cute. I would give someone away from it
- WS Yeah it's really too specific. I don't think you can have

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RH How about not having a title?  
 WS I'm more in that direction than Video  
 GQ I like very much the Video, myself  
 PD What is it about Video that...  
 RH Is Video an idea?  
 GQ Well there is the idea that the original idea in Greek, idea, means to see, and that video gives idea its visual dimension again takes it away from the head idea and puts it into...  
 RH Well my reaction to the cuteness in it is probably the way you'll get a lot of people to react. That's a very common reaction, I would think. They're not going to go deeply enough into what you're thinking about  
 WS It stops thinking about the subject rather than encourages an openness about...  
 RH It sounds like soap, or something. It sounds like something that a very Madison Avenue tricky number that we're confronted with  
 WS How do you like the equally ridiculous title "Window"  
 RH How about a magazine about video processing if that's what it's about  
 WS No we're discussing the possibility of it being wider than that  
 RH "A Magazine of Video Processing and"  
 WS No, no  
 PD That's pretty honest. What's it supposed to be?  
 RH How about a sentence for a title? Or do we need a logo like Madison Ave?  
 WS We're in the process, aren't we? Oh he's got the...whatever it is.  
 GQ We've got...spiffy  
 GQ I think it needs a title because of the nature of the means by which you put it in the world, as in any expectations of the people in the world. You don't want it to completely undercut your liability  
 WS It would be hard to agree on doing it without a title. I think that's the crux of the whole enterprise, that if we can group around a common belief in a word that we're doing, then we will have gotten much further than we are now  
 RH How about "Signals and Stuff"?  
 WS How about just "Stuff"?  
 RH How about "Signals"?  
 PD How about "Getting Jp in the Morning"?  
 WS There was a magazine called "Signals" in 1953  
 RH Did it work? (laughs)  
 WS Yes it's going on  
 PD "Getting it Jp"  
 WS "Signals" doesn't quite do it. I like it. I have a feeling that what I think, or feel, maybe we could do it in those words  
 GQ You broke the rule  
 WS It's hard. That's a very, and thing. You have a hard time with the titles of your work. So we're asking...  
 RH I don't have hard times with it. I just wish for it to happen. Sherry or I wind up with a name because we have to refer to the same thing somehow. How do you refer to your magazine?  
 WS The magazine, or I don't know, everyone refers to it differently. We're trying to get a common referral point  
 PD It's a very new idea. The whole project... we're still working from the point of knowing what it is that we're doing  
 WS We are doing it, though, Ralph. We may be doing it, we may not be doing it

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- RM Well you should find a good funding source
- WS That's a pretty good title
- GQ You see we have the means of production. Our costs are relatively low for doing this kind of thing. It's a fraction of what it would be otherwise
- RK Are you thinking of a fairly elegant production?
- GQ Yes, yeah, because we have that capability
- WS Four color cover...
- RH What are you thinking in terms of selling it?
- GQ Price? We're not at that stage yet. It needs a whole lot of thought. It depends on distribution, the context in which it appears...
- RH What's Ginsberg doing these days. You ought to find him
- GQ He was up at our place recently. He's going to do a benefit for us in the spring
- RH He's had enough problems with his publications that he might be able to get involved in it
- GQ He's an old friend and he likes the operation. He's going to do a benefit for us. But I'm not anxious to publish him because that's what everybody wants to do and ...
- RH I still have two or three copies of the Eros upstairs. He went through hell...
- GQ Oh you're talking about Ralph Ginsberg you just through me off. I was talking about Allen Ginsberg. Allen Ginsberg no artist at all.
- RH Yeah I was curious about. I don't know why it popped into my head. He's the only elegant publisher, or one of them
- GQ That's a different kind of elegance. When I think of the elegance of "Aperture", a magazine in photography, at the production level, it's something I've held in mind as a good example of something. I mean high production in that level appropriate to the medium. It's involved partly because Neil and also Gary were taken by "Aperture" magazine as a level of production. Part of it is the earlier ones. "A" taken by it too. I have a different sense of what it would be. Well it's very interesting in the direction of making it in the art world, making it with a lot of the magazine selling, wants the magazine to have lower something more general nature. This is a new idea. I only met him yesterday for the first time
- RH Oh really? Far out (laughs). God
- RH Yeah, that's interesting
- RH I love it
- RH That's interesting, very interesting. I didn't realize that, oh but the idea that very well developed is that the magazine is a magazine of process wide. And I imagine it in the context of a small magazines
- RH I have a thing but I'm having thoughts about this whole thing, and the main encouraging thought I have is that you're too damned son. It's just, you know, I don't know. The idea of being more general may make some sense. But it's general in spreading it all over, it's general in concept. Because you're talking about what you're going to do with this thing. So if you can find some way to tie that on, altogether, and make it a common, it has word, some sense for the idea, then it may work. It's a very general idea.

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[illegible]

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- GG (cont.)...with an audience of several hundred that we really want to do that will make history in the world that it makes history in and that's quite enough. And if it does catch on, it catches on and we expand it. But Willoby's involved and it implies...he's got a large ego about the question of publications making it in the world because he belongs to that world. I don't object to that. I'm just not sure I'm interested. On the other hand I'm not against the magazine making it if it doesn't lose its authenticity, its usefulness to the people who really need it.
- PD What's the use of this?
- GG I'm less interested in selling video, the process of video, to the people who don't know about it than I am to sustain, feed, and help develop the sense of self awareness that's in the artists who do it, and to create a language out of that that is appropriate to video. One of the original ideas is to create an actual discourse out of the experience of video rather than leave it to the critics who'll employ film vocabularies and more conventional video vocabularies to what doesn't fit into those...
- PH You're probably dealing with about a hundred or two hundred of the outside people right now that are really involved in this stuff
- GG I think the audience is larger than that. One of the ways I'd like to develop the audience is by involving certain poets in the magazine
- RH Oh, okay, yeah
- JQ Because there is a larger world of people who know what process is in poetry
- GG You're selling the thing too. I mean you say you're not but...
- JQ Well I'm a poet interested in video. I am extending my experience, that's what I do as an editor. I make larger what is otherwise just my experience. If I'm a teacher I may come up with a bunch of converts, but I might not be out to do that. If I've a course in process poetry or process video or both of them together, that's what it would be
- PH We'd you wouldn't come up with too many converts. I don't think you would anyway. I know I don't. You usually wind up with three or four at the end out of forty or fifty to start with
- PD That's alot, though
- JQ I don't come up with any more than that with the kind of poetry that I'm really interested in. I know I've a course in poetry. It's not different in that sense of poetry to other people in that area. I've integrity for a long time. It's not the other dimensions of it. All of the things you could say about video documentaries, it's a kind of video, and the world of video in the late 60s, I could give you the same story back about poetry only it's been going on a longer time.
- PH You were teaching at Stony Brook? When was that?
- JQ 1965 and 1970
- PH So Nam June was out there
- JQ Yeah I knew Nam June out there. That's when I first got interested in video actually. It was my second wave of interest
- PH He used to tell me horror stories about Stony Brook and the way they treated him

Ralph Hocking and Sherry Miller interview 2/6/79

# OPEN STUDIO VIDEO PROJECT

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GH Oh sure. I could tell you some about him or about me. , ' was out there. That created a little bit of receptivity to Nam June, Lawrence had his own problems  
GH We were thinking of putting <sup>Oh</sup> <sup>with</sup> <sup>count on the cover, a</sup>  
colorised version  
RH Well I couldn't advise you on that. I haven't seen it yet (laughs).  
PD Maybe you could go to Peggy Cass. It's on record. Yeah or even Eleanor Gugenheim  
RH I've often wondered whose cunt that is, man. Nobody'll tell me  
PD I wondered about that an hour ago  
GH It looks like coin operated  
RH It was plugged in here with CCBS through there, that's the idea. That was one of Nam June's and my collaborations in the sixties. I don't think he knows whose cunt it is "Oh is this somebody's cunt?" (Inaudible)

GH Sherry, do you make tapes too? Do you work with cameras?  
SM Um... I don't know how to answer that one.  
GH Really?  
SM I've done some portapack stuff and some stuff on my own. But mainly when we do it, we do it together  
GH It's a kind of really a collaboration that's happening. I'm just curious as to whether you deal with the machinery as such yourself  
SM I understand what the machines do and I can work them, but I don't use them  
GH To me, that's very interesting. actually, to be a part of video without touching the machines. It's actually the kind of relationship that I could enjoy myself. Ralph, do you ever use feedback?  
RH I used to. I haven't used it for a long time. I find it too weird  
GH Volatile  
RH Too weird for me to deal with. I'm very interested in it  
GH I've recently been tugging my horns in it. I feel a drawing from me because of the rawness of it. The kind of thing I'm working with is a very uncontrolled thing, too. As far as feedback it is, it's usually just the threshold of the camera not turned at all, just the threshold straight on, not reversed or anything  
SM We've been talking about putting together a tape show of feedback stuff  
GH I'd like to see a tape show of a matrix of monitor just a hundred times  
RH Feedback? Feedback, all feedback shows  
PD Walter's probably doing the right now in Manhattan  
GH Well I know he's got his large together. He's gonna wait it out into his IP  
RH He's got it running?  
GH Yeah. In fact, when I call him I can hear it in the background just whooping away  
GH It's wonderful to see these tapes. I'm really loving this. Do you know Jim  
RH No

(machine talk...)

GH Voltage control, too, which is real nice. There's a hard square wave that's bizarre. It punches it in and it has a delay to it and it's still delaying when the square wave thing goes off so when it turns the reverb off it's still going

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GG It's called bleed-through?

RH Yeah

PD It happens on the six o'clock news

RH I can't quite deal with the images. That's quite fancy. We were doing some things this morning but we didn't record anything

GG At what point do you begin to record? Do you have a sense that you've arrived at a field where you can set the parameters and you know that you can...

RH It seems like it might work and you say, all right let's record something and Sherry says "ah" and we start recording. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't

GG So you both tend to feel that the moment has come and turn on the tape

SM Quite often we'll record the segments, such as this one, and then we'll rerecord five or six different times. It's like variations...

GG So your editing process is in the doing again rather than in the messing with the tape

RH Yeah. I don't like to deal with editing 'cause it's...for one thing it takes you the next generation in which you make copies. And when you have limited access the way we have, why, the copies are really terrible. I can make a second generation copy that's pretty good. A third generation tape...not too easily. I'm a firm believer in not recycling my tapes. I find myself going back and looking at things after a month or so and then I get interested, so I don't throw things out too quickly

GG Do you keep all tapes?

RH Yeah. I used to recycle my tapes but now I'm pissed because I haven't got the tapes I used to.

GG Right. Oh I really believe in that keeping

RH I'm going to have a hell of a lot of tape for somebody to sort through some day

PD You ought to appoint an executor

RH I sent a tape to this Ithaca video festival and then I read a review that said it was an exercise in editing

GG I'd you write back and say if it were going to be an exercise in editing, it would be an exercise, at the very least, in non-edited

RH I refuse to write back. I got bored with trying to explain.

GG I would like to point out that you're a bit of a control freak. It's a very important point in front of the world's thing RH I solve the whole problem by not sending anything this year

GG You deprived yourself of another amusing moment

RH I've decided I want to get a grant. I've never been able to get a grant for myself. I've never been able to get a grant for myself. I've never been able to get a grant for myself. I've never been able to get a grant for myself.

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- GM (cont.)...in front of it and then go the same way until they went behind it. So there was an essentially a sort of backing space...
- RH A sort of delay in there. You're trying to figure out where they are... (laughter)
- GM Well actually there was a delay through there, but not through tape, through using the frame buffer and triggering it
- RH Yeah the frame buffer. Well we did a thing, well, Artis and those guys did a tape together a couple years ago. It was really interesting; it was, you know, carving a space in the center
- GM Was it Peer Bode and Marilyn Buckman?
- RH There were tons of people involved, I don't know, Brian...
- SM Video events in Binghamton...
- RH Yeah, oh boy what a zoo
- GM It's interesting because the attitude toward editing seems to me to be possibly something-- a comment on process in itself-- I mean that the convenience of within expensive systems creating better second generation tapes to do whatever with. But that's convenience. There's really more to it than that, right?
- RH Oh yeah alot more to it. I have a luxury of being able to go back and look again because I'm not confined to events as they happen. I'm not working with...the worst example I can give you is the guy falling out the window. He won't fall again for me so I've got to get him on the way down, quick, and then get the momentary stages of his falling that somehow represent the whole thing. It's very much a thing beyond the idea of just dealing with editing. It's what the hell the whole thing of processing something is all about is that you can study it
- GM Well I don't think I completely grasp it yet
- RH All right, let me try again. If I go through something and Sherry gets through something, then we can study it
- GM In the process of...through the feedback of...
- RH We can immediately go back and look at it
- GM Through the self monitor or, or...looking at the tape right afterwards?
- RH Through the tape
- GM I see, and then go do it again, I see
- RH Then I look at it and study it and think about it. And Sherry looks at it and studies it and...
- GM Right. It becomes text. Now this is very important-- very very important. They become text, a sequence of a process, drive into texts, but nevertheless texts. And one of the things about texts is
- RH I'll sublimate my paranoia about words and ahead laughs
- GM Text is a powerful word. It has to do with a weave in the present in which consequences occur in the medium. When if something happens in it is happening in the medium and is also a product at the same time
- RH Well what is context then?
- GM What is context?...the text area is the context. The context is the text with, con-text. It means we create a context here because we are all what we're all in the world if we do or whatever it might happen to be. Those are contexts or frames by virtue of the fact that there is more than one text coming together in a larger text. And a text is something that we make, that is made, that produces the context for ourselves, that is about it the moment of reflection and the opportunity for self awareness that I think you're talking about.







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- RH (cont.)...I'm trying to do, in the long run, is to find a language that directly relates to what is happening. If I can't say where, then at least I can say something else
- NZ Are you both looking for the same language?
- RH I don't know if we're looking for the same language, no, I don't think so
- PD We won't know until we find out
- RH But Paul knows a hell of a lot more what he's doing than I do. And what I'm doing upstairs doesn't relate directly to the computer and we're trying to interface the whole thing
- PD I don't know if it's ever going to work, Ralph
- RH Well it may or it may not. If we keep fucking around with it we'll see what happens. But that's the nature of the whole thing
- GH I don't see why it won't work
- PD Well, something will work
- RH It's an expensive attitude and that's the problem that we have now. You know, everybody thinks that we're not being directly productive or whatever
- PD Well, a lot of bucks have been blown on this computer. I'd say four or five thousand dollars you guys have invested in computer, now
- RH That's all? We had more like ten or fifteen or twenty thousand invested in that computer project
- PD You're kidding
- GH In developing hardware or developing the soft...
- RH Hardware and software and the people who are involved in developing this, yes
- SM We spent about ten thousand dollars from the Endowment and that includes Don's salary, Walter's salary, plus Paul and the hardware
- RH We spent more than that
- PD And the salaries are more than the hardware, or at least as much as the hardware. I'd say you've got about \$100,000 to \$150,000 worth of hardware there
- NZ And getting Brewster off of the physical project and that information, his time in the Television Center?
- PD Well, it's a lot more than that. If you started at the beginning of that relate to computer project, and all the things that relate to every operation, I'm sure the computer project would come to at least a third of the total operation of what we're doing. So I don't know what to put it all at. I'll say that we're really going to have to work on it and in the total investment, if I don't have a shot I mean that's ridiculous. Who cares?
- PD Well, to tell you what's going on...
- NZ Yeah, the expenses of film and labor are kind of...
- PD Ralph has been trying to convince me to get a video camera for a couple of months now. And finally said okay Ralph I'm interested. Let's do something
- RH That's the way to look at it. I've been offering it to me a response ability
- PD Well that's the way to look at it. I mean you've been trying to get me interested
- RH Yes, no, I think I see this as an interesting thing. Are you interested in it?
- PD I finally got interested in it. I mean I started thinking about it and I got interested in the computer aspects as related to what I know about video, and what I know about video related to the computer and the

# OPEN STUDIO VIDEO PROJECT

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PD (cont.)...attempt to form a language

RH But my basic view point on this is the same viewpoint that I have-- and I have it stronger about this project than what these guys are doing in developing a magazine. I think that it's incredibly premature because there's so much to learn about just the simple shit that I've got sitting upstairs as far as I'm concerned. And again I'll keep qualifying this and then I'll quit. The main thing that I'm concerned with is to try to get as much going in one time with people interested in, you know...they can evolve and develop things that I don't know about. If I can find somebody to get this to happen, okay. If I can't, then fuck it. But it's not a life-support system as far as I'm concerned I've got what I need and I'm trying to see if some of these other areas plug together and if they make any sense to each other. So that's my approach to saying hey Paul, this is a possibility of something to explore for you.

PD I find it interesting. And I find it interesting as a way to escape...  
RH Well one of the reasons I kept saying things like this to you was you kept saying to me, "I'm interested in the arts. And the people who've made sense to me in the past have been potters and people involved in the arts." And I'm saying all right, maybe there's some crossover at this point

PD Well what happened friday which was...I did alot of talking friday  
RH Of course you did. Somebody had to and you were the only person who knew what the hell was going on

PD Well what I heard coming back was people saying, "Ah. I see something happening here. I don't know quite what it is but I see something happening." And the next step is to begin to produce a little paper, and not anything more than that but a little paper that has some words on it that say ramp, sign wave, computer as applied..

RH That's up to you. I have no idea what to do...

PD Well I'm telling you what I'm going to do

RH Go ahead and do it

PD And I'm telling you what makes sense to me. I'm saying, you know, sign wave...it's on paper and the plan is to make the computer understand these sorts of statements

RH You mean with a machine readable interface where you have a "ramp" and it would understand that?

PD Well you could go on for a while at your own risk. The symbols in type which in is one of the most native modes, but recognizing them with a microphone is not ruled out by any means. It would certainly be more real time

RH Pretty hard to do, too. And you have problems with mean with the computer recognizing the word ramp...  
PD In that 3/4 of the time

RH ...if I ...  
PD word ramp

RH See that's a word that I get from a lot of other people

RH Which is what we talked about, too

RH You can get into that

RH Light pen drawing a ramp instead of thinking ramp

RH Sure. At before all of that comes you have to get a little sphere of







Ralph Hocking and Sherry Miller interview 2/6/73

# OPEN STUDIO VIDEO PROJECT

STATION HILL RD BARRYTOWN, NY 12507 to (914) 758-6308

RH (cont.)... And the practical aspects now have to do with not buying more machines that can translate things in individual form or translate things in the aural form, but that we can type into, so we're getting a language that we can type into the machine. In fact we're going to try to take that one step further and try to type things into the machine without using the teletype, which is something that Paul and I are going to battle out the next few days

GM Without teletype how would you get into the system?

RH I was thinking about a chisel and a hammer (laughs).

PD I think it ought to be a Cadillac. We'll put your Cadillac up on blocks and with the steering wheel the accelerator and the brakes...  
 RH No, what we're talking about is a CRT display of what's going on instead of coming out on paper. So you get rid of the mechanics. You use a keyboard but you don't use the mechanical devices

PD There are alot of ways to go in this, Gary. I've come into this with very little preconceptions about how we ought to talk to the computer. I know how to talk to computers on the computer's level because I've dealt with that for a long time. I've always had to deal with a computer as a computer

... (after listening one of Ralph's tapes)

GM Very powerful, that tape. But I felt that the going further and further into the textures was very interesting in itself

RH Yeah it is. The going in is interesting and there's a whole long space in the middle that is not terribly interesting, and then coming out of it is impossible. Besides, the part that has always fascinated me is getting in there

GM Right

WS I'm always interested in getting out, Ralph. I always get in easily. It's getting out that's a problem for me

RH That's what I'm saying (laughs)

WS I know, I know but you're too lucky for me. I have to camouflage it with language

PD Where's that bottle of scotch?

WS Well Ralph you've given us alot more than we bargained for. It's going to take us a long while to digest all of this

RH Well, I'm still working on it

WS (laughs) Godspeed

PD Awful good scotch

RH It's probably older than you are

PD I just never heard of it

WS How much a bottle? . . .

RH A boogie?

WS A bugle

GM I think it averages out to about eight dollars a bottle

WS That's a good buy

GM In fact I should have a few more bottles down there waiting for me

WS You will. You'll have an unlimited supply

RH No

WS No? You mean there are limits? Wait a minute turn on the recorder again, I'm interested in the limits. We didn't seem to get to the limits. It seemed so vast. If I could have some limits then I'd be able to deal with it more



# OPEN STUDIO VIDEO PROJECT

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- GH Ralph, do you work just about every day now?  
RH On this stuff? No, I work mostly on weekends  
PD Most of the time he deals with trying to tell a mixed audience how the low level is black and the high level is white  
RH They're catching on  
WS Gary just suggested "OHM" for the title. It may be esoteric and a little bit technical but...
- RH I'm looking to get the average intelligent college involved person. I mean I'm leveling off at that point. I don't think that we're going to get too many people from the Ford Motor Company assembly line involved in this  
PD I don't know. We're never going to know how this is going to work until we can take a guinea pig sort of person after something happens...  
RH The thing that has happened, Paul, either because of you or because of time, as Sherry said, this is kind of the way Walter was going, but the thing that happened around me and that had to deal with time and with voltage is probably the most sensible thing for me so far  
PD I think it's sensible because it isolates an area that can be handled. I feel comfortable with it as a delineation of what can be done. It may not have alot of potential...  
RH You know one step beyond is dealing with totally common words like red and orange. My fantasies, initially, were that the computer was going to do everything for me. Now I know that the computer is going to control voltages and give commands on certain parameters to devices outside of itself. So I have to know the devices and I have to know how to tell the computer to control the devices  
PD Which means that the computer kind of makes it even harder for you in alot of ways  
RH Well, right now. But the reason it's harder for me is because I don't know what to tell the computer to do because I don't know enough about what I'm doing in the simple knob twirling process  
GH I think you should use the giant audiosynthesizer until everything else gets developed  
RH Yeah, but if you put the giant audiosynthesizer on the computer you get the same problem. You've got to tell the giant audiosynthesizer what to do  
PD There is nothing wrong with not using the computer. The question is, can you use the computer to do something?  
RH I wrote two or three grant requests this year that were based on trying to find space between analog and digital which had to deal with voltage control, oscillators, and the kind of stuff I'm doing now, that nobody's done so far. I think there has to be that kind of progression  
PD Well I think alot of people don't understand it. I mean most people are brought up in the tradition of analog and...  
RH Give me a volume control and I know what I'm doing (laughs)  
PD You tell them that if a volume control means 1, 2, 3, or 4 and not turn it and it goes louder, people freak out 'cause they don't realize that there's this discreet continuum  
RH At the same time, Paul, with this group that I've been talking about, these kids.... I've been at it for three or four weeks now and those fucking people know what a sign wave does. It took me seven years to figure out what a sign wave does

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- PD You haven't shown them what an oscilloscope is yet?
- RH They don't know what an oscilloscope is
- GH How are you planning on controlling color?
- PD I'm not planning on controlling color. I'm planning on providing knobs for people to plug in any way they want to plug in. If it happens to get plugged into color, fine
- RH You control color by voltage and amplitude, or voltage and time, say
- GH Like, for instance, David's polarizer. It would be much more complex because you'd have to have three signals to get one color, whereas if you had a phase shifter, it would be only one letter or one number representing the color
- RH So we're going to deal with complexities in that relationship
- PD The point about the computer, though, is that I'm making no statements about color whatsoever. We'll produce that control voltage and you can plug that control voltage into whatever you want to
- RH And you have to figure out what the voltage does
- PD And what it means to you is another level. Here it is and you can define it in these terms. But the symbolic attachment to meaning-- color, key, clip, whatever, is higher up
- RH I think the Jones colorizer is, in some ways, ~~be~~ the most inefficient possible machine to plug a computer into because there are too many controls in it. You've got so many parameters to deal with in that machine that it's going to drive you crazy. So what you have to do is set a few of them and then plug a few things into the other things
- GH Well, yes and no. I mean where all the knobs and things are multiplied is the color. That's where all the knobs are
- RH Who the hell needs a voltage control on the pedestal and the main?
- GH All right so you don't voltage control, you just leave it set
- RH And another example is that if my keyers are any indication of what the range is on some of these controls, out of that I'm dealing with this
- GH So am I on mine. He still hasn't gotten that taken care of
- RH Fortunately I've got bias knobs on my outputs and I can go boom boom boom in that range. There's no way you can deal with the entire range in the keyer. You're always working somewhere in the middle. And the idea of grey level keying is ridiculous. It doesn't key on grey levels at all. It doesn't come close. I've tried it. I've tried to pick out certain areas of grey, and there's no way that I can take the two controls that I have on my keyer now
- GH You mean if you had both keyers on the same image
- PD You could do it with a position switch in a well calibrated system. There are calibrated colorizers and calibrated...
- RH That flip off from light to dark that I showed you upstairs? I've got three levels of voltage and I'm going to go from the darkest to the lightest. It's all I can do to get everything set to go to light to dark. Now if I want to go from a grey to a lighter grey there's no way. I have no idea what your machine's going to come out like but I know my machine won't do it. I don't necessarily even want to do that because I'm still dealing with the extremes and trying to figure the whole thing out. But David's design on the earlier keyers, which is what I have, are...
- GH Yours go much harder

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- RH Really? Well my soft heads are like fades
- GH Right that's what mine are like too
- RH Well it's nice to know my theory of it's being in an infant state is true
- PD Just fitting the pallet together, just beginning to figure out that there is such a thing as titanium dioxide and you could mix it with pitches to make white paint
- RH A lot of people have come with machines where, when they work they work and when they don't work, nobody can fix them
- PD Well you can fix any machine, but you don't know what it was meant to do originally and you can't fix it back the way it was
- RH If you have a schematic for a machine you can fix it. <sup>David</sup> hasn't put out a schematic for his machine so you send it back to him and hope he fixes it. Lot's of luck
- GH How many machines does he have out?
- RH Three or four that I know about, <sup>1, Abe</sup> has quit. I mean as far as I know he's not doing anything
- GH What about George Brown?
- RH I don't think George is doing a hell of a lot
- GH So Dave's going to come out on the market at just the right time. But someday somebody's going to throw the whole god damned thing into whacko and take it to David and say "here, fix it for me" and David's not going to have time to do it and that's going to wipe him out because somebody will say "all right, this guy won't fix anything" so he won't back up his systems and that's what Sony and these companies that keep in business do. They develop a whole service organization
- PD You have to develop a service organization to back up everything that Jones ever put out. I think I could probably fix anything that Jones ever built, but the question is do you want to (laughs)? Is there any fun? Is there any good times?
- RH You have to be fairly knowledgeable about what's going on in order to fix it. You can't hire someone to come in off the street who knows the common denominator of fixing a television set by following the schematics and realizing what's going on, because there's nothing to follow
- PD Well there are these levels of craziness. I mean I've followed some of Dave's designs and he designs kind of like Escher would put together a drawing
- RH I've got some drawings that you wouldn't believe but they work
- GH Do you mean in terms of how they look or the actual design?
- PD No, no the ideas of what it should do. You're talking about a phase shifter. I worked on a phase shifter at one time, you know, how to build a good phase shifter. I remember having my mind totally blown because I'm pretty into straight forward ideas. I don't like to do obscure things. Dave was getting into this convoluted approach to phase shifting which was; this amplifier has such and such a delay and then we put it through this other amplifier and then back through this one and speed back and the delay adds here and subtracts there, and this crazy...
- RH Do you know what Jones aspirins are? If in doubt add a capacitor.
- GH I've got boards upstairs that have so many capacitors on them you wouldn't believe it
- GH My keyer has about thirty or forty capacitors on it

# OPEN STUDIO VIDEO PROJECT

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- PD Well David is stuck back with the discrete transistor design. I mean I did a little discrete transistor design in electronics but never at the level that David is doing it. I'm used to designing with blocks. I have integrated circuits and I buy an amplifier with these parameters and I read in the manual that it has this gain and this bandwidth and so on, put it in, and use it. David builds three stage class A amplifiers out of transistors. I'm not at that level at all. I mean I could follow what goes on, but the internals of building amplifiers is not something I ever had to deal with 'cause I don't build them, I buy them off the shelf
- GH But I think that has something to do with some qualities.
- PD No. It's a comment on the difference between the way I view things and he views things
- GH I think that's the reason why the coloring in the David Jones colorizer is the way it is. It has developed out of analog systems rather than integrated shifts
- PD Because he can build it exactly the way he wants it. He can optimize at any point. He can degrade it at any point. If I were going to design a system I'd be hard pressed in a lot of cases to pull off the kind of real diddly control that he can do
- PB Then there's that whole thing of being able to standardize it so that he can produce it in some quantity and it will be a stable system. Because with the system that we have at the Center, there are just some things about it like we're not sure how to set it up
- GH He's there, though
- PB He's not there enough and I don't have enough control over it to utilize it efficiently. It goes out of tune easily
- RH It's a crazy fucking machine
- PB It's beautiful, Ralph, is what it is. And we don't know how to do it. It's that kind of dependence
- RH That's cleaner than some of the boards he has built
- GH The keyer that he had didn't look like this, though, at all. Is that the same?
- RH No that's the number 3 keyer. He and I didn't speak to each other for months because he didn't fix it and he said I ripped him off and blah blah and blah blah and blah blah. We finally got ourselves straightened out and he built this keyer. It's the best god damned thing I've got. It will do all kinds of weird shit. It's really a pretty fair line regulator which is not easy to come by
- PD You mean the clip is non-linear
- RH I have no idea. All I know is the god damned thing makes lines and it has got soft edge and it goes into positive and negative and all kinds of weird shit. He hates the design now, but at the time it was a good idea
- PD Yeah that's the problem with designers. They grow
- RH I'm very happy living in a world of prototype. I'd rather be there, actually
- GH I would too
- RH And there's no way in hell you could ever figure out a way to duplicate the god damned thing

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 QQ Ralph it has been very terrific